



DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

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WATERFOWL INVENTORY REPORT INDICATES DUCK DECLINE HAS BEEN HALTED

"The continental population of wild ducks and geese has apparently hit the bottom of the decline and leveled off," Albert M. Day, Director of the Fish and Wildlife Service, told Secretary of the Interior J. A. Krug in presenting his report on the results of the annual waterfowl inventory conducted by the Service in January.

"After analyzing all the data turned in by our observers, it looks as though we have about the same number of birds this year as we had last year. We have been unable to detect any appreciable change either upward or downward in the number of waterfowl."

In certain areas, particularly in the Mississippi flyway, the Atlantic flyway, and the Pacific coast states of the Pacific flyway, some encouraging increases were reported, Mr. Day said. These were offset by a decrease for the Central flyway--the bright spot in last year's inventory--and decided decreases for Mexico and Canada with the exception of the Maritime Provinces.

Director Day gave credit for the halting of the decline of the past three years principally to the rigid hunting regulations of 1947 and to the fact that the hunting season was generally poor throughout the country due to the type of weather that prevailed. In addition the director cited the value of the Service's wildlife refuges which provide resting and feeding places for the birds on their annual migrations.

In concluding his report Mr. Day said, "Although the situation this year is encouraging compared to what it has been for the past three years, it holds little hope in the way of relaxation of the waterfowl hunting regulations for 1948. Sportsmen and conservationists will agree that we would be too optimistic if we let the bars down before we are certain that the duck population trend definitely points upward. We must still continue to hold the line."

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